

Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3871

“get real. get maine!”

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products. **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, **368-4433**
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public's interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 15 prospects in Penobscot County. Freedom, **382-3255**

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource**

Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service Agency and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS-Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Bangor, **947-6622**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine with offices statewide. Bangor, **800-287-1485** or statewide **800-287-0274**

Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
www.maine.gov/argiculture/

“get real. get maine!”
www.getrealmaine.com

Maine State Web Portal
www.maine.gov

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide
www.getrealmaine.com/connect/

References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
Maine Revenue Service

Penobscot County



2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Penobscot County.

Farmers in Penobscot County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	363	341	320	263	248
Male Operators (N)	NA	585	595	457	453
Female Operators (N)	NA	48	59	67	72
Average Age	50	49	49	53	55

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

Penobscot County Farmland



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	591	633	654	524	525
Total Acres (A)	152,210	155,019	145,949	118,152	116,593
Average Farm Size (A)	258	245	223	225	222
Total Cropland (A)	57,694	63,154	56,662	53,916	49,019
Total Pasture (A)	NA	22,352	20,082	18,162	12,841
Total Orchard (A)	220	278	272	300	296
Total Berry (A)	212	84	224	244	199
Total Hay (A)	26,737	31,484	31,554	28,199	25,283
Total Woodland (A)	80,001	78,892	76,910	56,801	58,686

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Land in farms decreased one percent from 118,152 acres in 1992 to 116,593 acres in 1997. Full time farms decreased six percent from 263 farms in 1992 to 248 farms in 1997.



November
2003

Unique to Penobscot County

- There are 16 granges in the county. **County Grange**, Carl Moon, Master, Milford, 827-3698
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau**, President, Jim Crane, Exeter, 379-3641
- **Maine Highlands Farm Products Promotion Group** is assembling a regional map showing farms that have products/services available for the public. A Public Health grant is helping the group coordinate local food alternatives with Eastern Area Agency on Aging and the Meals for ME program. Donna Lamb, contact, **564-3301**
- **Land Trust Organizations**
Newburgh Area Heritage Trust (founded 1992) 234-2053;
Orono Land Trust (1986) 866-4520
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county's agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Farmland Protected in Penobscot County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- Currently there are no permanently protected farms

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

Maine Dept. of Agriculture

- 509 acres protected through Farms for the Future (5 years)

USDA Farm Service Agency

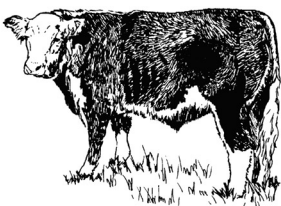
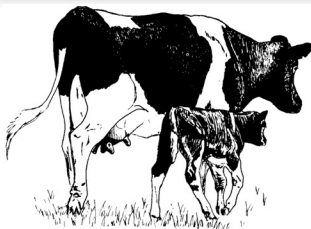
- 40 acres protected through the Conservation Reserve Program (10-15 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 31,571 acres farmland in 2002 — 11,881 acres cropland plus 19,690 acres woodland
- 1,662 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Program

- 550,626 acres in 2001



Prime Soils in Penobscot County

PRIME FARMLAND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

113,836 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

177,496 acres (estimated)



Penobscot County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$6,061,000	\$4,782,000	\$6,747,000	\$10,340,000	\$11,150,000
Livestock/poultry and their products	\$16,004,000	\$19,447,000	\$18,590,000	\$18,474,000	\$18,828,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$337,000	\$271,000	\$222,000	\$1,338,000	\$2,391,000

*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997

Food, Farms* and Fairs in Penobscot County

- 60 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public
- 5 Farmers' Markets serving multiple communities
- 14 Farms offer Pick-Your-Own fruits and vegetables
- 5 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 17 Farms host special on-farm events and activities such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs
- 2 Agricultural Fairs (Bangor, Springfield) drew up to 77,260 people in 2002

**Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*

Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

Maine Maple Sunday (4th Sunday in March) 6 farms opened their sugarhouses.

Open Farm Day (4th Sunday in July) 7 farms welcomed the public onto their farms.

Maine Menus Month (October) 7 restaurants made special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Great Maine Apple Day (November) many farms celebrated Maine's apple harvest.

Maine Senior FarmShare assisted 23 farmers with providing locally grown produce to 1,092 low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.



The average market value of agricultural products sold in the county increased 4 percent from \$54,989 in 1992 to \$57,101 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed that 89% surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine's economy.